

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 809

By Briggs

A RESOLUTION to commend Blake Patrick Connolly for exemplary service as a legislative intern.

WHEREAS, each legislative session this body is pleased to recognize certain persons who have committed themselves, through their adroit service, to the betterment of the legislative process; and

WHEREAS, Blake Patrick Connolly is one such individual who has distinguished himself in his role as a legislative intern for Senator Richard Briggs, M.D.; Blake's work has resulted in innumerable benefits for the legislators he assisted and the General Assembly as a whole; and

WHEREAS, a student at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville (UTK), where he is highly regarded by his peers, Mr. Connolly has achieved academic success while participating in numerous extracurricular activities; and

WHEREAS, a Tennessee HOPE with Merit Scholarship recipient, Blake Connolly is a member of the Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity, the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, and the Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society and participated in UTK's political science study abroad program in London; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Connolly examined presidential nominations of federal district and circuit court judges as an undergraduate political science research project and has received an undergraduate research grant to study the financial crisis of 2008; he will be taking economics classes at Harvard Business School this summer after completing his legislative internship; and

WHEREAS, he will graduate in May 2017 from UTK with two degrees, one in economics and the other in political science, and a minor in American studies; and

WHEREAS, a native of Boca Raton, Florida, Blake Connolly graduated from Independence High School in Franklin; and

WHEREAS, he is the son of Kevin and Jackie Connolly and the brother of Brooke Piteo and Brock Connolly; and

WHEREAS, eager to familiarize himself with the characteristics and complexities of Tennessee state government and to further his studies, Blake Connolly brought his many abilities and singular expertise to Capitol Hill for the 2016 session of the One Hundred Ninth General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, playing a casual game of basketball, he injured his knee just before session; the injury required surgery, and Blake has been forced to use crutches during his entire internship; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Connolly greatly increased his stamina and his training regimen while working on Capitol Hill, sometimes walking several miles off-campus on crutches for errands; and

WHEREAS, he does not like sweets, but he loves candy, and his favorite is chewy Star Burst; and

WHEREAS, an avid golfer and soccer player, Blake Connolly enjoys watching both sports, with no interruptions whatsoever; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Connolly served as coach of the intern basketball team; he was given the job out of pity, because he was on crutches, and no one else was interviewed; still he expertly led his team to victory, 54-46; and

WHEREAS, Blake Connolly hails from a long line of bowling ancestors and has competed multiple times in the State bowling championship; and

WHEREAS, found crying after Spieth's loss at the Masters, Mr. Connolly did his best to keep it together the following day at work; and

WHEREAS, while Mr. Connolly loves sports, his favorite pastime is actually online shopping; he is proficient at tracking packages hourly, a talent he has in common with Dr. Briggs; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Connolly endangered the life of a legislative assistant by giving her a chocolate cherry cookie, even though he knew she was allergic to cherry; upon realizing his mistake, he tried to play it off as an April Fool's joke; and

WHEREAS, his most memorable piece of legislation this year was the de-annexation bill, and he marveled at the results of the Byzantine political process; and

WHEREAS, Blake Connolly enjoyed learning parliamentary procedure and the rules of the committee system, as he watched dead bills come back to life again and again; and

WHEREAS, he also enjoyed listening to war stories, watching attacks on YouTube, learning the anatomy of the heart and lungs, and becoming an expert on the history of French cheeses, full totality of the sun, and melted Easter eggs; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Connolly's favorite story by Senator Briggs involves an exit medical interview from the military in which the Senator did not properly hear a question regarding handling the stress of PTSD, which misunderstanding resulted in a response that is priceless; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Connolly is proud to have mastered the pronunciation of all medications listed in SB 932, including but not limited to, quinolinyndolecarboxylate, maphthoylindazoles, methylindazolecarboxamindobutanoate, and naphthalenyndolecarboxylates, and is perhaps most astounded that these four words accounted for a whole line of text; and

WHEREAS, due to either improper training by his supervisor or questionable common sense from the intern, Mr. Connolly scored an A+ for effort, after he had asked several other interns for help in mailing a single letter; when he could not find an envelope, he retrieved one from another Senate office, scribbled through the name and office number, printed Senator Briggs's office information next to the scribble, and put the missive out for mailing; before finding this solution, he thought about hand delivering the document enclosed because it was to a Nashville address; and

WHEREAS, said envelope, upon being recovered by staff before it was mailed, was laminated for reference purposes and a learning opportunity; when he was asked what was wrong with the envelope, Blake said he thought the mail staff had laminated it because he had forgotten to attach a green mail form; and

WHEREAS, Blake Connolly became his supervisor's top spy by using Snapchat and all other social media to befriend her teenage son and then report back to the office with the son's daily posts; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Connolly is by far the intern with the best sense of humor; he possesses a knack for turning stressful moments into light-hearted fun and will be missed tremendously by the good people of WMB 317; and

WHEREAS, throughout the 2016 legislative session, Blake Connolly has surpassed all criteria that define a devoted and conscientious legislative intern; and

WHEREAS, Blake Connolly has performed his many duties with extraordinary insight and rare decorum; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby commend Blake Patrick Connolly for outstanding service as a legislative intern for Senator Richard Briggs, M.D., and extend to him our best wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.